

ADULT HEALTH STATUS IN TENNESSEE, BRFSS, 1997⁷

Health Status and Morbidity among Tennessee Adults

General Health Status

- Overall, 18% of Tennessee adults described their general health status as fair or poor in 1997. Females were more likely than males to perceive their health as being fair or poor (21% versus 15%, respectively), and nonwhites were more likely than whites to perceive their health this way (20% versus 18%, respectively).
- Twenty-one percent of Tennesseans perceived their general health as excellent; 32% perceived their health as very good; and 29% perceived their health as good. Males were more likely than females to perceive their health as being excellent (23% versus 18%) or very good (33% versus 30.5%), and were about as likely as females to perceive their health as good (29% versus 30%).

Diabetes

- Diabetes was reported by approximately 4% of Tennesseans in 1997. Diabetes was reported by 5.2% of females versus 3.4% of males, and by 5% of nonwhites versus 4.2% of whites. Nonwhite females had the highest reported prevalence of diabetes (6.5%).

Hypertension

- Twenty-eight percent of adult Tennesseans who have ever had their blood pressure taken reported having been told their blood pressure was high. More females (31%) reported that they had been told their blood pressure was high than males (25%). Nonwhites were also more likely to have been told their blood pressure was high compared to whites (30% and 27%, respectively). Persons 65 years of age and older had the highest prevalence of high blood pressure (53%).
- Hypertension prevalence decreased with increasing income. Persons with annual incomes below \$15,000 had a much higher prevalence of hypertension (40%-44%) than those with annual incomes between \$15,000 and \$34,999 (25%-34%). Persons with annual incomes equal to or greater than \$35,000 had a prevalence of hypertension between 15% and 22%.

⁷The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing statewide telephone-based surveillance system designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The BRFSS monitors a variety of health behaviors and practices contributing to leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Data from Tennessee's BRFSS sample are useful for planning, initiating, and supporting health promotion and disease prevention programs. Results from the BRFSS are also useful in monitoring Tennessee's progress toward achieving state health objectives. These results are weighted.

Oral Health

- Forty-seven percent of Tennessee adults reported that they had no dental insurance coverage.
- Slightly over 1% of adult Tennesseans reported that they had never visited a dentist or dental clinic, while another 15% reported that they had not been to a dentist in the past 5 years. Another 5% reported an interval of between 2 and 5 years since they had visited a dentist, and 11% reported between 1 and 2 years. Of persons who had not visited a dentist or dental clinic in the past 12 months, 18% reported that their main reason for not visiting a dentist was the cost.

Health Access

- Twelve percent of adult Tennesseans reported that they had no health insurance in 1997. Males were more likely than females to lack health insurance (14% versus 10%, respectively). Nonwhites (14%) were more likely to lack health insurance than whites (11%). Persons with the highest prevalence of no insurance were 18-24 and 25-34 years of age (18.5% and 17%, respectively).
- Eleven percent of employed Tennesseans lacked health insurance. Thirty-three percent of persons out of work less than one year, and 32% of persons out of work for one year or more reported having no health insurance. Twenty-two percent of self-employed residents and 19.5% of students had no health insurance.
- Of those persons without health insurance coverage, 8% had never had health insurance, while another 26% had not had health insurance for 5 or more years. Fourteen percent had not had health insurance in the past 2-5 years; 11% had not had health insurance in the past 1-2 years; and 38% had been without health insurance for 1 year or less.

Utilization of Preventive Services

Flu Immunization

- Sixty-nine percent of Tennessee adults ages 65 and older reported that they had received a flu shot within the past 12 months. Males were just as likely as females to have received a flu shot (69% each), while whites were much more likely than nonwhites to have received a flu shot (72% versus 48.5%, respectively).

Pneumonia Vaccination

- Forty-five percent of Tennesseans ages 65 and older reported that they had received a pneumonia vaccination in their lifetimes. Again, males and females

were equally likely to have received a pneumonia vaccination (45% each), while whites were more likely than nonwhites to have received a pneumonia vaccination (47% versus 33.5%, respectively).

Mammograms and Clinical Breast Examinations

- Seventy-three percent of females ages 40 and older reported ever having had a mammogram and clinical breast examination. White females in this age-group were more likely than nonwhite females to report these examinations (75% versus 63%, respectively).
- Among females ages 40 and older, higher educational level was associated with higher prevalence of receipt of mammograms and clinical breast examinations. College graduates were much more likely to have undergone these examinations (85%) than those who had never attended school, attended only elementary school, or did not complete high school (57%, 55%, and 65%, respectively).

Injury Control

Adult Use of Safety Belts

- Overall, 66% of Tennessee adults reported that they always use a safety belt when they drive or ride in a vehicle. Thirteen percent of adults reported that they nearly always wear a safety belt; 11% sometimes wear one; and 10% seldom or never wear one.
- Males were less likely to always use a safety belt than females (40% compared to 28%, respectively). Nonwhites were less likely to always use a safety belt than whites, (39% compared to 32%, respectively).

Child Safety

- Thirty-four percent of respondents had at least one child in their household. Of those persons, 70% had children between 5 and 15 years old at the time of the survey, and 22% had children 4 years of age and under.
- Of those persons with children aged 5 through 15 years, 19% reported that their oldest child did not always use a safety belt when riding in a vehicle. Of those Tennessee adults with children 4 years old and younger, 3% reported that their oldest child did not always use a car safety seat when riding in a vehicle.
- Less than 1 in 3 of persons (29%) with children 5 through 15 years of age reported that their oldest child always used a bicycle helmet when riding on a bicycle. Forty-three percent reported that their oldest child seldom or never wore a bicycle helmet. Females were more likely than males to report that their child always used a bicycle

helmet (32% versus 26%, respectively). College graduates were much more likely to report that their child always used a bicycle helmet (39%) than high school graduates (28%) or those with some high school (20%).

Smoke Detectors

- Nine percent of Tennessee adults reported that the smoke detectors in their home had never been tested. Another 3% reported that it had been one or more years since their smoke detectors were tested.
- Those with annual incomes below \$20,000 were more likely to report that their smoke detectors had never been tested (11%-18%) than those with annual incomes of \$20,000 or more (6%-9%). Adults in the 18-24, 25-34, and 65 and over age-groups were more likely to have never tested their smoke detectors than adults in other age-groups (12%, 10%, and 10%, respectively).

Risk Factors for Disease and Injury

Overweight

- Based on body mass index, 32% of Tennesseans were overweight at the time of the 1997 BRFSS. Males were similarly likely to be overweight as females (32% versus 31%). Results indicate that nonwhites were more likely to be overweight than whites (40% versus 30%). Nonwhite females were the race-gender group with the highest overweight prevalence (43.5%), while the race-gender group with the lowest overweight prevalence was white females (28%).

Smoking

- Current smokers were defined as persons who reported ever smoking 100 cigarettes and who smoke now, either every day or some days. Current smokers represented 27% of adults -- 28% of males and 26% of females; 28% of whites and 21% of nonwhites. Twenty-four percent of adults smoked every day, and 3% smoked on some days. The race-gender group with the lowest smoking prevalence was nonwhite females (17%).
- Current smoking was reported by 31%-32% of those between 18 and 54 years of age. Beyond age 54, current smoking prevalence decreased, with current smoking reported by 22%, 17%, and 7% of those 55-64, 65-74, and 75 or more years of age, respectively.
- Current smoking prevalence decreased with annual income. Between 34% and 35% of those with annual incomes less than \$15,000 reported current smoking. The prevalence of current smoking among persons with annual incomes between \$15,000 and \$24,999 was between 35% and 38%, while the prevalence of current

smoking among persons with annual incomes between \$25,000 and \$34,999 was 29%. The prevalence range of those with incomes of \$35,000 and up was 16%-23%.

Binge Drinking of Alcoholic Beverages

- Binge drinking was defined as drinking five or more drinks on at least one occasion during the past month. The overall prevalence of binge drinking among Tennessee adults was 7%, with 11% of males and 3% of females reporting binge drinking. Whites were more likely to binge-drink than nonwhites (8% versus 5%, respectively). At 12%, white males were more likely to binge-drink than other race-gender groups, and nonwhite females were least likely to binge-drink (2%).
- The two age-groups with the highest prevalence of binge drinking were 18-24 year-olds (15%) and 25-34 year-olds (13%). With a prevalence of 17%, students were more likely to binge-drink than adults who were employed, unemployed, or retired.

Chronic Drinking of Alcoholic Beverages

- Approximately 2% of Tennessee adults reported chronic drinking (i.e., drinking 60 or more drinks during the past month). Males were more likely to report this than females (3.5% versus 0.3%). Chronic drinking among nonwhites and whites was similar, at 2% prevalence each.
- The prevalence of chronic drinking among those between 18 and 54 years of age was approximately 2%. Chronic drinking among those 55 years of age and older was less than 1%.

Drinking and Driving

- One percent of Tennessee's adult population reported driving after having too much to drink, one or more times during past month. Males (2%) were more likely to do this than females (0.3%), while the prevalence of drinking and driving among nonwhites and whites was very similar (1% each).
- Adults in the 25-34 year age-group were most likely to drink and drive (3%).

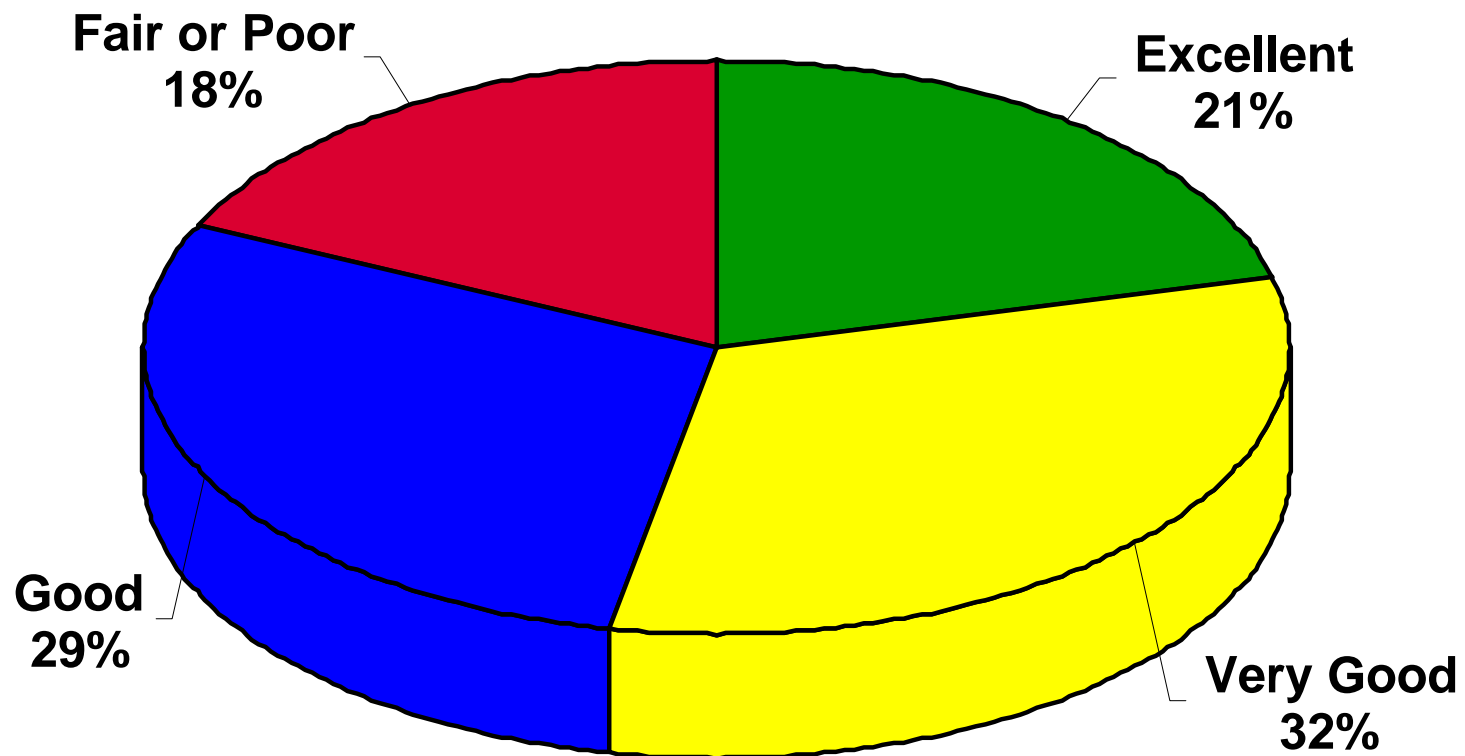
Sedentary Lifestyle

- A sedentary lifestyle was defined as less than 20 minutes of leisure-time physical activity per session and/or less than three times per week of leisure-time physical activity during the past month. Fifty-eight percent of Tennesseans reported having a sedentary lifestyle. Only a slight difference was observed between males and females (60% versus 57%, respectively).

- Percentages of adults with sedentary lifestyles rose from 42% among 18-24 year-olds to 57%, 60%, and 59%, respectively, among persons in the 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54 year age-groups. The highest sedentary lifestyle prevalence was among the 55-64 year age-group (69%), and persons 75 years of age and older (65%). The 65-74 year age-group had a sedentary lifestyle prevalence of 56%.
- Low income was associated with sedentary lifestyles. Seventy-five percent of persons with annual incomes of less than \$10,000, and 62% of persons with incomes between \$10,000 and \$14,999 a year, reported sedentary lifestyles. In contrast, 54% of persons with annual incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999, and 45% of those with incomes of \$75,000 or more a year, reported sedentary lifestyles.
- Lower educational attainment was also associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Fifty-one percent of adults with some college or technical school, and 46% of college graduates, reported sedentary lifestyles. In contrast, 77.5% of those with elementary school educations; 71% of those with some high school; and 64% of high school graduates reported sedentary lifestyles.

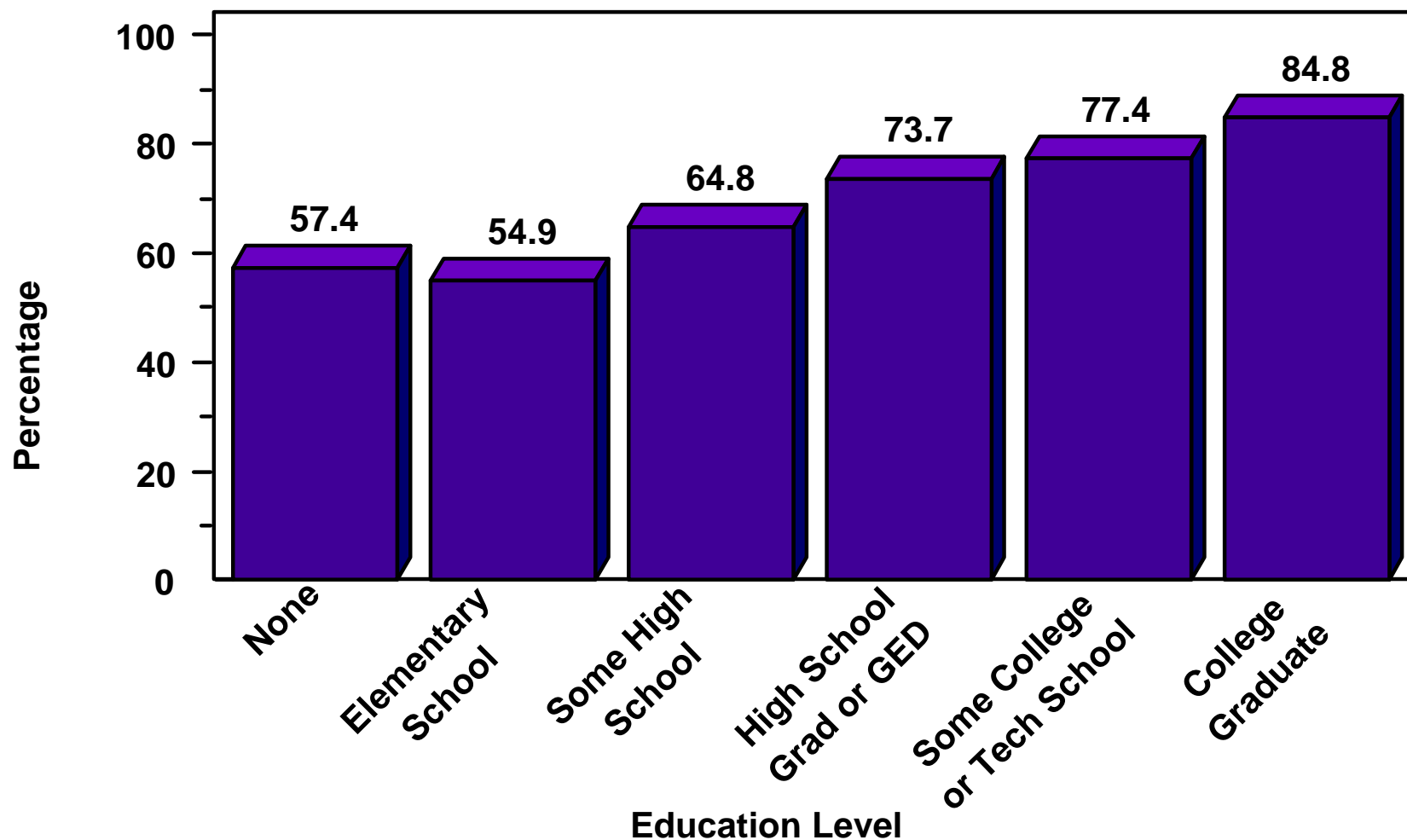
Source: 1997 Tennessee BRFSS. TDH and CDC Division of Policy and Planning, 1998.

General Health Status of Tennessee Adults, as Reported in the 1997 BRFSS



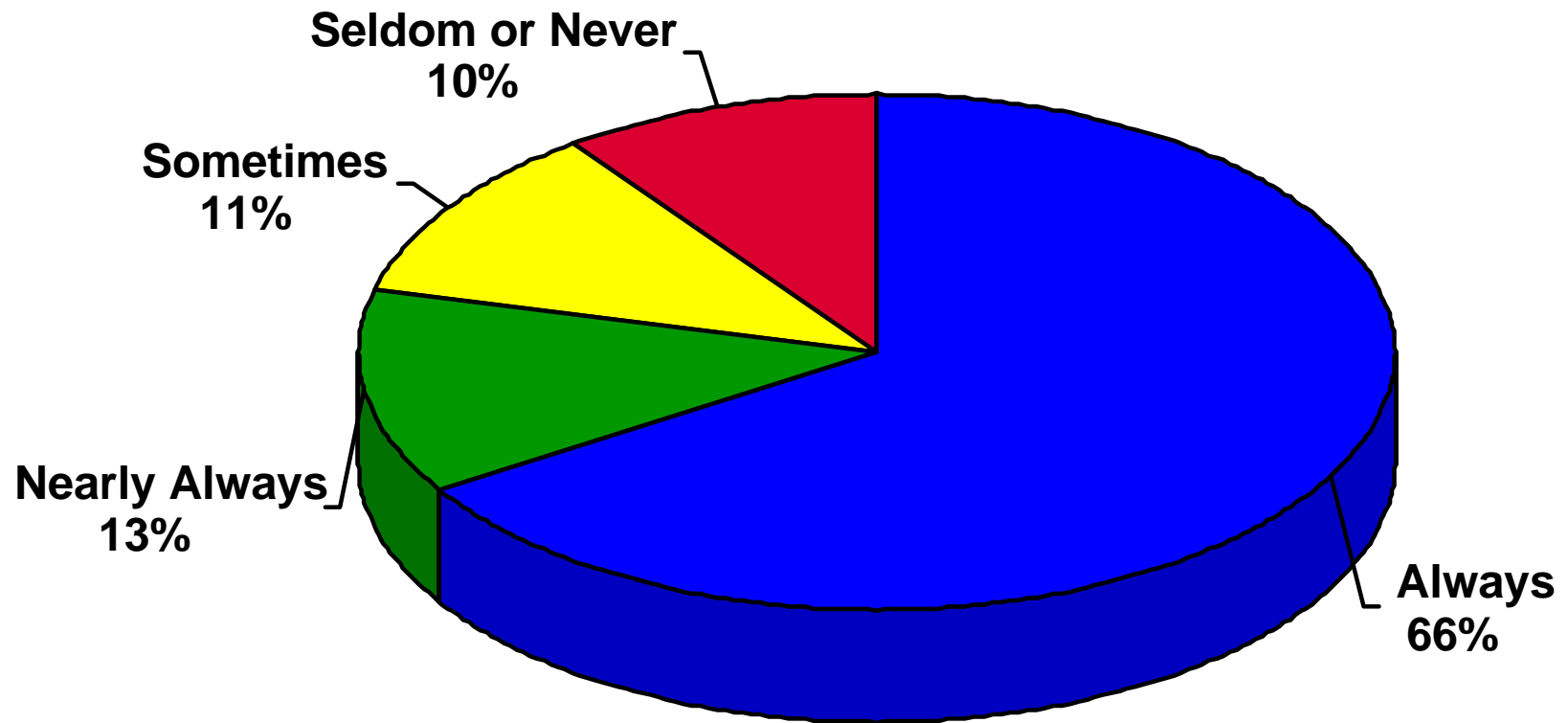
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, TDH, 1997.

Percentage of Tennessee Females Aged 40 and Older Who Have Ever Had a Mammogram and Breast Exam, by Education Level, BRFSS, 1997



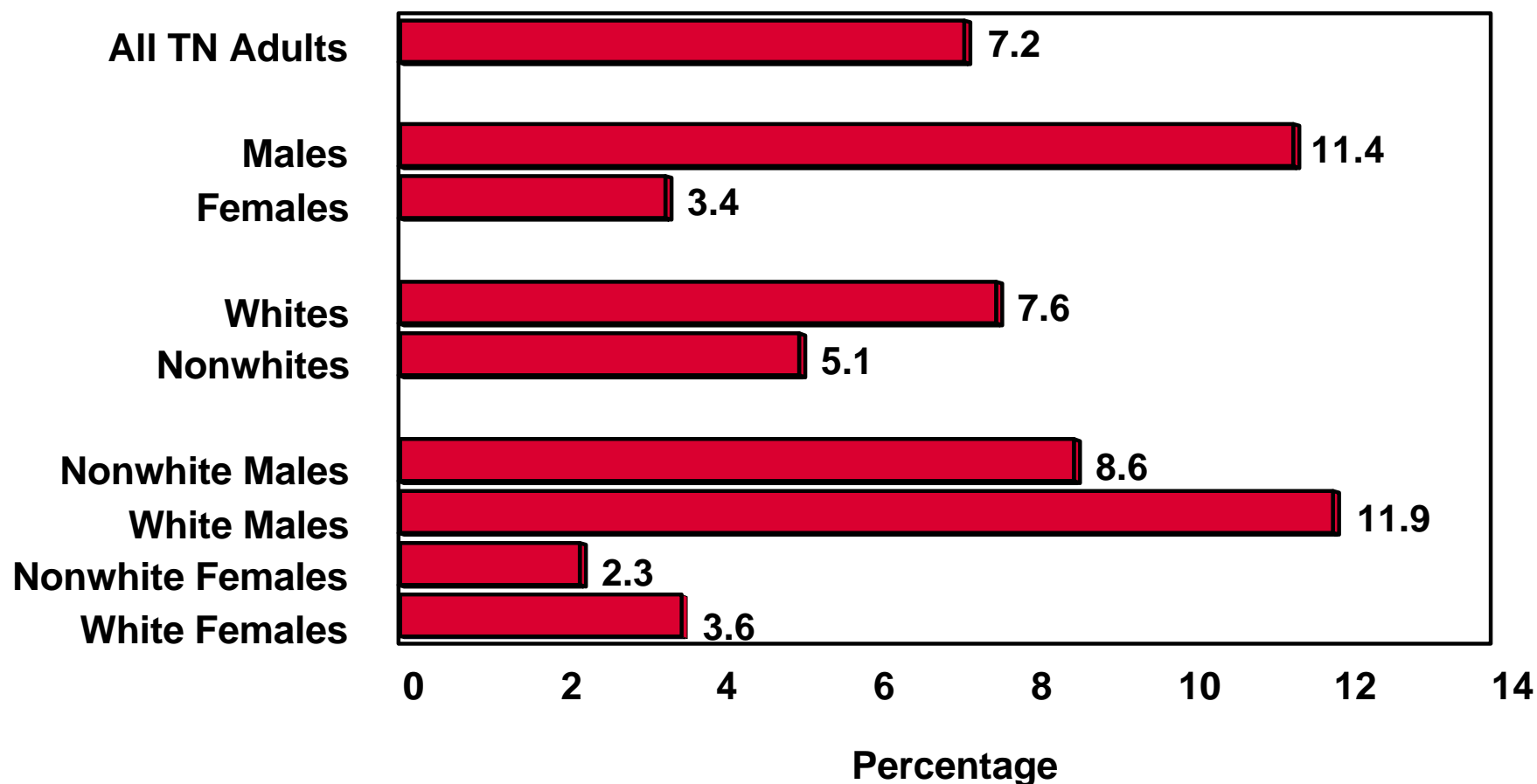
Source: Tennessee BRFSS, TDH, 1997.

Reported Frequency of Safety Belt Use among Tennessee Adults, BRFSS, 1997



Source: Tennessee BRFSS, TDH, 1997.

Prevalence of Binge Drinking among Tennessee Adults, by Gender, Race, and Race-Gender Group, BRFSS, 1997



Source: Tennessee BRFSS, TDH, 1997.